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CIA ALLEGEDLY HAD HAND IN ISLANDS PROBE
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The CIA took part in the investigation of three Turks and Caicos Islands officials who allegedly agreed to sell protection to drug smugglers wanting to use the island, a defense attorney says.

Attorney Albert J. Krieger, representing former islands Chief Minister Norman Saunders in his federal conspiracy trial, said Friday he revealed the CIA information during cross-examination of the government's main witness to show officials were going overboard in the war against drugs.

'My client made some very poor judgments on several occasions on this matter,' he said. 'But the government goes about dangling all kinds of incentives before these people to draw them in.'

Saunders, 41, former Minister of Commerce and Development Stafford Missick, 47, Aulden 'Smokey' Smith, 33, former parliamentary secretary to the ministry of works, and Canadian businessman Andre Fournier, 46, were arrested March 5 at a Miami hotel.

They were charged with 11 counts of conspiracy to import cocaine and marijuana, conspiracy to travel -- and traveling -- in interstate and foreign commerce in aid of racketeering.

All except Fournier, who pleaded guilty last week and is expected to be a government witness, face a maximum penalty of 65 years in jail.

The CIA connection was revealed during cross-examination of Barry Seal, a former commercial airline pilot and convicted drug trafficker. Seal, who is serving a 10-year sentence for drug smuggling, agreed to cooperate with the government in an attempt to get his sentence reduced.

Krieger said records from a previous sentencing hearing for Seal indicated that his attorney said Seal had done work for the Drug Enforcement Administration and the CIA. In both instances, they involved a transport plane Seal flew to Nicaragua in 1984 to pick up drugs.

'Is it not true that you worked in CIA -sponsored activities in Nicaragua?' Krieger said.

'I don't remember whether I did or not,' said Seal. 'I believe I was told the CIA installed cameras on the plane.'

Krieger then produced a document from Seal's previous sentencing hearing which showed that CIA involvement was part of the record.

DEA special agent Gary Sloboda, who posed as a drug smuggler along with Seal, later testified primarily on Missick's role in the alleged scheme to offer the West Indian archipelago as a drug smuggling safe haven. He said Missick indicated he could help launder money at 'friendly' banks.